



DOI: 10.14434/do.v16i2.36199

Italian Modena NIDCAP Training Centre

Natascia Bertoncelli, NIDCAP Trainer

The NICU of Modena has based its care on the family-centred principles for years thanks to Prof. Ferrari Fabrizio, who guided the NICU for over 40 years. He met Heidelise Als and Berry Brazelton in Boston; he worked with them, and he learned the importance of the individualized assessment and the behavioral observation of preterm and full-term infants to identify their strengths, vulnerabilities, and developmental goals and to individualize the NICU care to the infant's needs.

At the beginning of 2000, the NICU of Modena started its education and training in the NIDCAP method for nurses and medical staff to offer individualized care which meets the unique neurodevelopmental needs of infants and parents from admission to discharge. The physiotherapist (Natascia Bertoncelli) flew to London to start her NIDCAP training with Agneta Kleberg. In 2005, she became the first NIDCAP Professional in the unit, and in 2013 she became the first NIDCAP trainer in Italy thanks to the invaluable support and experience of Agneta Kleberg and Deborah Buehler. During those years, four more NICU professionals (two nurses, one doctor, and one psychologist) became NIDCAP certified in the NICU of Modena.

The Italian Modena NIDCAP Centre was established in 2013, directed by Prof. Ferrari Fabrizio, and is based at Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria. We celebrated the opening of our centre together with professionals coming from many Italian NICUs and Heidelise Als, Björn Westrup, Dominique Haumont, Monique Oude-Reimer, Sandra Lescure, Joseph Perapoch, Inga Warren, and Silke Mader joined us as speakers.



Heidelise Als at the opening of the Italian Modena NIDCAP Training Centre (2013)

Now, the training centre medical director is Prof. Alberto Berardi, who is also the head of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and the NIDCAP Trainer is Natascia Bertoncelli.

In 2016, we were honored to host over 100 participants for the Annual NIDCAP Trainers Meeting in Bologna whose organization wouldn't have been possible without the huge work of many people over the years.

NIDCAP progress in Modena continued with the training of additional NIDCAP Professionals. Over the last five years, some NIDCAP Professionals left, and others started training and joined the team. Now, our NIDCAP multidisciplinary team includes nine nurses, two doctors, a physiotherapist, and a psychologist. Our goal is to offer a unique educational model of family-centred care for preterm and full-term babies and their parents. Our NIDCAP training centre offers education and training to various NICUs in Italy: Genova, Florence, Siena, and Rome.



Modena NIDCAP team



World NIDCAP Day

The implementation of NIDCAP care in our NICU has not always been easy, especially in the last three years of the global lockdown. In addition, the request for NIDCAP education and training from the Italian NICUs decreased during the lockdown. Despite the restrictive policies, our NICU was successful in not separating infants from their mothers and fathers. Parents continued to have 24/7 access to their infant, but only one parent at a time could enter the NICU. Skin-to-skin contact was never interrupted during the lockdown period. Over the last few months, requests for NIDCAP education and training came from several NICUs in Italy. This is very encouraging, and it makes us feel fueled again for new educational experiences.

On a national level, we participated in the writing of a document on discharge from the NICU together with the Italian Study Group on Developmental Care, the Italian Society of Neonatology, and Vivere Onlus, the national association of parents of preterm infants. The document will soon be published on the website of the Italian Society of Neonatology and it will be available for all NICU professionals in Italy.

We celebrated World NIDCAP Day together with infants and parents in the NICU and Mani di Mamma Onlus hand-made nice little hats for all the babies in the NICU.

In the last year, we collected data on parents' experience of infants admitted to our NICU in Modena. Parents' experiences were gathered through guided interviews of their perceptions in a NICU implementing NIDCAP care. We also investigated the safety of early skin-to-skin contact with infants and parents in our NICU. The findings were rewarding, and they were published in two different articles.^{1,2}

In 2023 we celebrate 10 years since the opening of our

center in Modena and we are honored to be part of the amazing and supportive community of the global NIDCAP community.

References

1. Bedetti L, Lugli L, Bertonecchi N, Spaggiari E, Garetti E, Lucaccioni L, Cipolli F, Berardi A. Early skin-to-skin contact in preterm infants: Is it safe? An Italian Experience. *Children* (Basel). 2023 Mar 17;10(3):570. doi: 10.3390/children10030570.
2. Bertonecchi N, Lugli L, Bedetti L, Lucaccioni L, Bianchini A, Boncompagni A, Cipolli F, Cosimo AC, Cuomo G, Di Giuseppe M, Lelli T, Muzzi V, Paglia M, Pezzuti L, Sabbioni C, Salzone F, Sorgente MC, Ferrari F, Berardi A. Parents' experience in an Italian NICU implementing NIDCAP-based care: A qualitative study. *Children*. 2022; 9(12):1917. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children9121917>

Annual NFI Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 25, 2023
2:30–4:00 PM CDT

Hyatt Lodge
2815 Jorie Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois, USA

We welcome members to attend in-person or virtually

